

Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



STATE OF ARIZONA
DEPARTMENT OF LAW
1275 W. WASHINGTON STREET
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007-2926
WWW.AZAG.GOV

ANDREA M. ESQUER
PRESS SECRETARY
PHONE: (602) 542-8019
CELL PHONE: (602) 725-2200

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Please note the following is a *My Turn* column from Attorney General Terry Goddard.

This fall my Office began hosting a series of local Crime and Fraud Prevention forums around the state. We have spoken with community members and law enforcement officials in Avondale, Flagstaff, Payson and Lake Havasu City. We will host the next forum in Ahwatukee on Monday, Nov. 5.

The forums provide an opportunity for residents to learn more about crime and fraud in Arizona, including methamphetamine, human smuggling, drug trafficking, identity theft, consumer scams, elder abuse and Internet safety. Attendees can also participate in discussions with law enforcement officials about crime in their community.

Representatives from community organizations that include AARP, the Better Business Bureau, Phoenix Police Department and the Northeast Valley Meth Coalition will also be present with valuable information.

The forums give me and local law enforcement the chance to hear first-hand about local crime problems and help identify ways that my Office can assist law enforcement across the state.

Some statewide crime trends that my Office is addressing include:

Auto Theft – Arizona ranks among the top five states with the number of auto thefts in the country. A vehicle is stolen in Arizona every 10 minutes. My Office has created TheftAZ.azag.gov, a website that allows people to quickly determine if a car in their neighborhood has been reported stolen.

Identity Theft – Far too many Arizonans have been victims of identity theft. Repairing damage to your credit and reputation often requires considerable time and resources. My Office has issued a new identity theft publication with prevention tips, which is posted on our Web site (www.azag.gov). We also have an ID Theft Helpline, (602) 542-2145, for those who have been a victim of identity theft.

Consumer Fraud – While my Office vigorously enforces the consumer fraud laws, I want to help consumers stop scam artists **before** they strike. We receive more than 25,000 complaints and some 90,000 phone calls annually. Knowing more about consumer fraud and available resources can help Arizonans can be better prepared to spot red flags and protect themselves and their families.

Senior Exploitation – Seniors are a common target for identity theft and other frauds. We successfully prosecute many civil and criminal cases against fraud perpetrators and scam artists. But one of the most important things we can do to prevent these cases from occurring is to educate members of the community about how to avoid becoming a victim.

I encourage members of the community to attend the Ahwatukee Crime and Fraud Prevention Forum and engage in a dialogue with local law enforcement. Crime cannot be stopped by law enforcement alone. It is essential that law enforcement agencies work with community organizations, consumer and volunteer groups, government and businesses to identify, apprehend and prosecute those responsible and help prevent future criminal activity.

For more information, or if your community organization would like to have an information table at the event, please contact the Community Services Program of the Arizona Attorney General's Office at (602) 542-8022, communityservices@azag.gov, or www.azag.gov.